



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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**For Immediate Release**

April 5, 2006

**BREVARD COUNTY ARMED CAREER CRIMINAL SENTENCED TO FIFTEEN  
YEARS ON FEDERAL NARCOTICS AND AMMUNITION CHARGES**

Orlando, Florida - U.S. District Judge Anne C. Conway today sentenced MICHAEL LEONARD PAYNE, age 22, of Melbourne, to 15 years' imprisonment for possession of ammunition by a convicted felon and possession with intent to distribute five grams or more of crack cocaine. In addition to the prison sentence, Payne must serve five years on supervised release and pay a special assessment of \$200. Payne previously had entered a guilty plea to both charges on January 19, 2006.

According to the evidence presented at the plea hearing, Payne met with an undercover agent from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives ("ATF") on March 10, 2005. During the videotaped meeting, Payne sold the agent 94 rounds of 9mm ammunition and 7.5 grams of crack cocaine. As a convicted felon, Payne is prohibited under federal law from possessing either firearms or ammunition. In addition, Payne's prior felony convictions qualified him as an Armed Career Criminal under federal sentencing laws.

The case represents the culmination of a cooperative effort between the United States Attorney's Office, the State Attorney's Office for Brevard/Seminole Counties, the Brevard County Sheriff's Office and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives ("ATF"). This is another case prosecuted as a part the Department of Justice program "Project Safe Neighborhoods" - a nationwide gun violence reduction initiative with strong support from ATF. United States Attorney Paul I. Perez is coordinating the cooperative effort here in the Middle District of Florida with federal, state and local law enforcement officials. In Brevard and Seminole Counties, State Attorney Norm Wolfinger is calling his PSN effort "Operation Cease Fire." The objective is to reduce violent crime by locating and seizing unlawfully possessed guns and then swiftly prosecuting the offenders using both federal and state gun laws.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Robert E. Bodnar, Jr., and Special Assistant United States Attorney Gregory J. Konieczka of the Brevard County State Attorney's Office.